DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 144 461 HE 009 247

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TITLE Unreported On-Campus Criminal Victimization Among Students, Staff, and Faculty at the University of Missouri Columbia Campus.
INSTITUTION Missouri Univ., Columbia. Extension Education Dept.
PUB DATE Jul 75
NOTE 10p.; Summery of Special Research Report No. 35
AVAILABLE FROM Extension Education Dept., University of Missouri at Columbia, Columbia, Missouri

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitudes; *Crime; *Faculty; *Higher Education; *Instructional Staff; *Police; Student Attitudes; *Students; Vandalism; Violence

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is threefold: (1) to establish if members of the university community (students, faculty, and staff) have been victims of selected crimes or incidents while on the University of Missouri--Columbia campus that were not reported to the police; (2) to establish a range of reasons why these incidents were not reported to the police; and (3) to measure the attitudes of the university community toward the police and their services on the campus. A sample of one percent of the faculty, staff, and students was questioned. Over one-half of the sample reported they had been victimized at least once on the campus; only one-fifth of these crimes or incidents had been reported to the police. Most major crimes are reported while the less serious crimes are not; however, crimes against persons are reported less frequently than crimes against property. Older members of each of the questionned groups were more likely to report victimizations and females were more likely to report them than males. The reasons for failing to report incidents fell into two categories: (1) the victim felt little chance of recovering property or identifying the offender; and (2) the victim felt the incident was not a police matter. The university community's attitude toward the police varied according to the group questionned. Faculty and staff who came in contact with police on campus have a favorable impression while students, generally, have a negative or less favorable impression. Several possible explanations for this variance are offered. (JMF)

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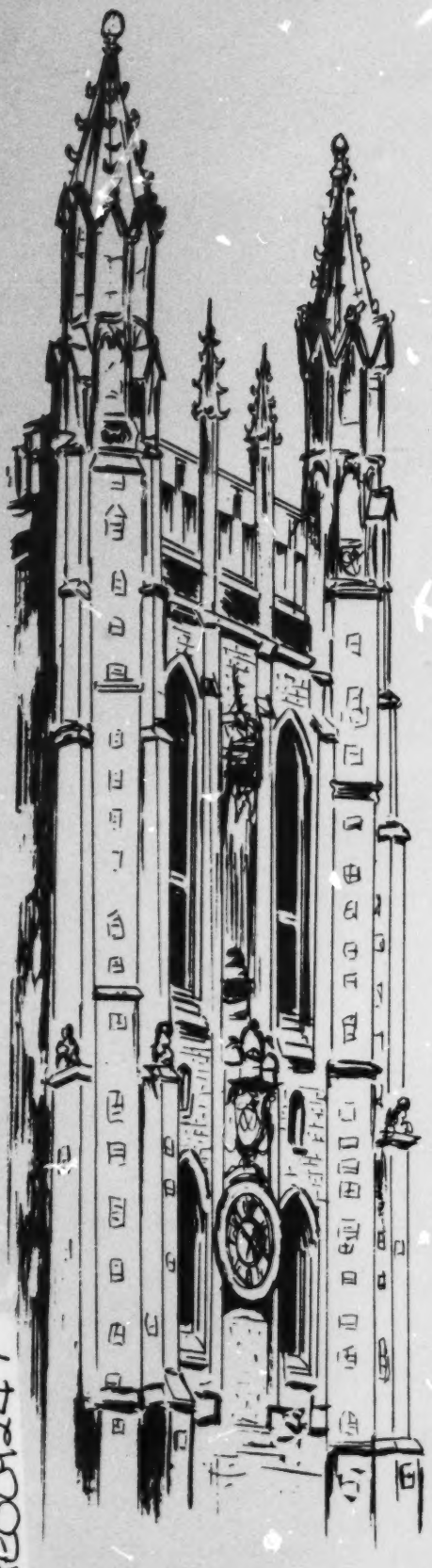

UNREPORTED ON-CAMPUS CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION AMONG STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI COLUMBIA CAMPUS

Summary of

Special Research Report

July 1975

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Training and Staff Development
Special Report Number 35
Extension Education Department
University of Missouri-Columbia
Edited by John G. Gross

HE009247

UNREPORTED ON-CAMPUS CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION AMONG STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY AT UMC CAMPUS

The Problem

One of the most perplexing problems facing the law enforcement administrator today is the development of an accurate statistical index of the amount and nature of crime within his agency's jurisdiction.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is threefold: 1) To establish if members of the University community (students, faculty, and staff), while on the UMC campus, have been victims of selected crimes or incidents which were not reported to the police; 2) To establish a range of reasons why these incidents were not reported to the police; and 3) To measure the attitudes of the University community toward the police and police services on the UMC campus.

Definition of Terms

Students: Full time (carrying a minimum of 12 hours) graduate and undergraduate resident students enrolled for the 1975 Winter semester on the UMC campus. (N = 18,600)

Faculty: Full-time and part-time teaching and research staff employed on the Columbia campus for the 1975 Winter semester. (N = 2,254)

Staff: Full- and part-time administrative service and support staff actively employed on the Columbia campus for the 1975 Winter semester, excluding full-time students so employed. (N = 5,245)

Police: For the purpose of this study it was assumed that the respondent might not recognize the uniform, organizational, or the statutory enforcement authority differences between University of Missouri Police Officers, Columbia Police Officers, University of Missouri Police Security Guards and Police Service Officers, Boone County Sheriff Deputies, Missouri State Highway Patrol Troopers, Ellis Library Security Guards, and University of Missouri Medical Center Security Guards. Therefore, it was recognized the respondent may have had contact with the representatives of any one of these organizations while on the UMC campus, and the attitudes or opinions about "police" must be viewed as relative to police in general and not any one organization in particular.

Sampling

A one percent (1%) sample from each category was judged to be statistically adequate and financially and administratively manageable.

Faculty	2,254 x .01 = 22
Staff	5,245 x .01 = 52
Students	18,600 x .01 = 186
	26,099 x .01 = 260

The faculty sample was drawn randomly from a computerized list maintained at the Data Processing Center. A similar procedure was used to

select the staff sample. The student sample was selected by using list sampling procedures, taking every 118th name from the alphabetized list of students registered for the Winter semester.

Results

The data were collected by a mailed questionnaire. The returns were as follows:

Faculty	86.4%	19
Staff	71.2	37
Students	62.4	116

Data as to the kind of victimization, number of such victimizations and the percentage not reported to police are given in Table I.

Conclusions

After reviewing the data, the following general observations were made:

1) Over one-half of our sample reported they had been victimized at least once on the UMC campus. Only slightly more than one-fifth of all the victims ever reported the crime or incident they were involved in to any police agency. 42% of the faculty sample reported being victimized at least once, and 50% of these victims notified the police. 35% of the staff sample reported being victimized at least once, but only 31% of these victims (less than 1/3) reported their victimization to the police. Of the student sample, 65% (almost 2/3 of all the students surveyed) reported being victimized at least once on the UMC campus, yet only 17% of those victims ever reported that crime or incident to the police. One possible explanation may be that students as a group are more naive and thus more

Table I

Categories of Crime, Victimizations and Percent Not Reported to Police

When On Campus:	Number of Victimizations	Percentage Not Reported
1. Has your car ever been stolen?	2	0%
2. Has your bicycle ever been stolen?	6	33.3
3. Has your car or bicycle ever been vandalized?	14	57.1
4. Have you been the victim of verbal harassment or of a verbal threat or verbal assault?	20	95.0
5. Have you been the victim of an obscene or harassing telephone call?	35	88.5
6. Have you been the victim of physical violence, a physical assault, or physical harassment?	5	60.0
7. Have you been the victim of an exhibitionist?	17	82.3
8. Have you been the victim of a rape?	0	0
9. Have you been the victim of an attempted rape?	1	0
10. Have you experienced the theft of any money or property?	43	55.8
11. Have you ever been threatened in any manner with a weapon of any kind?	2	0
12. Have you ever observed any of the above described crimes "in-progress"?	11	54.5
13. Have you ever been the victim of any crime not described above (for example: armed robbery, strong-arm robbery, purse-snatch, etc.), or of any incident that you felt was a criminal matter?	6	50.0

likely to be victimized and less inclined to report such victimizations. Another and more plausible theory is in the self-perceived nature of their life style. Most students (and many staff employees for that matter) view their living condition as only temporary. Life in the University environment is a series of burdens to be tolerated for a short while (including the possibility of being victimized by criminal activity) until the day when it can all be left behind as one moves on to a better social environment. Thus victimization is a nuisance to be tolerated for four short years. Faculty members, on the other hand, may view their condition as more permanent. Many of their values are predisposed toward maintaining the relative stability of this lifestyle. Being victimized by criminal acts upsets the equilibrium of the lifestyle they prefer, and they are more likely to report such incidents as a result. It was found that among all classes of victims, those who had generally been on campus longer and those who were older, two groups who perhaps had more at stake, were more predisposed to report their victimization than were the younger victims and victims new to the UMC campus. A slightly higher percentage of females reported victimizations than did males. However, a higher percentage of male victims failed to report their victimizations compared to female victims.

Most major crimes which occur on the UMC campus are reported to police. However, the vast majority of less serious "crimes against the person" appear to go unreported compared to less serious "crimes against property." Apparently people think more of their belongings than of their bodies. Common assault, harassment by telephone, and exhibitionism appear to be the most infrequently reported crimes. A possible explanation is that many

people may not recognize these incidents as violations of the criminal code, or may not be aware that methods are available to identify and apprehend such offenders, provided the incidents are reported to police.

2) Speculation aside, the majority of reasons given for not reporting an incident fell into two categories. An almost equal number of reasons were offered in each category. The two categories were: "Respondent felt there was little or no chance of recovering the property or of identifying the offenders," and "Respondent felt the incident was not a police matter." In addition, a substantial number of respondents indicated "The incident was too minor or the items taken were of little or no value." Less than 10% of all the responses to this question indicated the victims had reported the crime or incident to some person or agency other than the police.

3) Most University employees who come in contact with police officers on the University campus are left with favorable impressions. However, slightly more than one-half of all students who come in contact with police officers on the University campus are left with negative or unfavorable impressions. There are probably several reasons for this. One may be the age difference between police officers - all of whom must be at least twenty-one - and students, of whom approximately 85% are between the ages of 18 and 24 inclusive. Another possible explanation may be that students commit more crimes or are more likely to be treated by the police as suspects. Differences in socio-economic backgrounds, patterns of speech, dress, appearance, behavior, language and values are also likely to affect students' impressions of police officers, and vice versa. The police are more likely to be cordial and helpful toward University employees with whom they share certain values, experiences, expectations, and a "work",

"career", or "institutional" commitment; as opposed to students who as a group, are viewed as a mass of faceless and transitory non-entities for the most part. The police officer, especially the University officer, sees his fellow staff and faculty employees day after day, year after year, whereas he may only have one contact with any number of students in his entire lifetime. The problem here is traditional. Nobody likes a cop until he needs one. Similarly, nobody likes a cop until he at least has the opportunity to meet one in a neutral environment, free from stress, and make up his own mind. Part of this problem lies with the police officer, because the very nature of his work demands that he view others with an outlook that at least acknowledges a hint of suspicion; and because he must maintain himself at a constant level of mental alertness and physical tension to deal with the ever-present possibility of being thrust into a dynamic and potentially hazardous situation with little or no warning. Many people find this aggressive posture unfriendly, threatening and distasteful. The police officer must be conditioned by training to present himself as accessible, despite all of the defense mechanisms he employs to shield himself. The data points out the need for such training when one realizes that despite the generally favorable impression the University community has of available police services, a substantial percentage of the largest group within that community has been unfavorably impressed after personally coming in contact with the police.

Hopefully this study has identified several audiences the police should direct educational programming toward. Many persons appear to be unaware of the extent of law enforcement resources and services available on the UMC campus beyond parking control. There is a need to publicize

the fact that exhibitionism is a crime and a behavioral disorder, and that offenders need to be identified and treated. There is a need to publicize the fact that obscene and harassing phone calls can be electronically traced and the source can be identified and convicted with the assistance of the telephone company. There is a need for the Traffic and Parking Committee to more effectively publicize the pay-parking operation on the UMC campus and to make itself more accessible in terms of soliciting input regarding parking policy. A substantial amount of crime on the UMC campus goes unreported. There is a need to encourage better reporting of victimizations, especially among certain categories of students. Police administrators need to examine the impact their officers have on students' impressions. Goals like "providing a model police agency" become just so much verbage when the majority of students who have a police contact go away with an unfavorable impression.

Source: Research Report "Unreported On-Campus Victimization Among Students, Staff, and Faculty at The University of Missouri-Columbia Campus" by Michael C. Wagner, July 1975.